

## ST. PETER'S, ROME.



THE most magnificent structure that now exists in perfect splendour is the church at Rome, dedicated to St. Peter. It is indeed a temple in which man can pour forth his suppliant prayers to the great Redeemer of his people, with a recollection that all that genius could invent and art could execute, have been eagerly sought to raise it above buildings devoted to the ordinary purposes of life. It is adorned with the most exquisite taste; it is rich with every ornament that lavish wealth could obtain. A model of this splendid building is at the present moment exhibiting in Pall-mall, immediately opposite the Opera House, and a more faithful representation could not by possibility be seen. Not only is the external appearance of the noble colonnade of Bernini, the portico, the dome, admirably shown to the spectator, but by a most ingenious contrivance the aisles are opened, and all those wonders of the world, the paintings, the mosaics, the sculptures, the sepulchral monuments, the chapels, the gorgeous ornaments in gold, in marble, in lapis lazuli, in stucco and bronze, are distinctly rendered visible to the eye. This marvellous work is the production of the celebrated Gambassini, a name highly estimated throughout the whole of Italy for his extraordinary talents as a modeller. During fifteen years he bestowed incessant labour and attention to this great object, and the result is one of the finest pieces of art of its kind now in existence. The model is reduced to a hundredth part of the original size of the structure; it is executed in ivory and in wood; it may fairly be ranked amongst the great works of Italy, which maintain for it so high a rank in art.

The first inspection exhibits the grand se-

micircular colonnade of Bernini, which encloses the piazza or area of the church, within which is the Egyptian obelisk, and two magnificent fountains. The colonnade is composed of four orders of pillars, each fifty feet in height, surmounted by a balustrade, on which are placed 200 statues, each ten feet high. Two lateral entrances conduct to the church, and have likewise statues on their summit. Two statues of St. Peter and St. Paul, executed by Mino da Fiesole, adorn the white marble staircase. The portico in front, the balustrade, with the twelve apostles twenty feet high, the five doors, and the grand balcony from which the Pope pronounces his benediction,—all the rich architectural ornaments,—are given with a minute fidelity, which those who have frequently seen the grand original most fully appreciate.

The interior of the church is displayed with equal accuracy, and is of course an object of deeper interest; for even those who have not visited the great city are familiar with the outer aspect of the venerable Basilica; but to be enabled to form some opinion of the vastness of the interior, and the rich assemblage contained within the walls, the model of which we speak must be seen; and a better means of gratifying ardent curiosity could not have been devised. So admirable are all the proportions of this building, and so wonderfully adapted are the ornaments, that the first view of St. Peter's seldom excites astonishment; it is only when the details are entered upon that this feeling bursts upon the mind. Thirteen chapels are contained within, each boasting works of art of the greatest men that have lived in the tide of time. In the first chapel stands the work of Michael Angelo, the Statue of

Piety; and there is situated the tomb of Christina of Sweden. In the second chapel is one of the great masterpieces of the world, St. Sebastian, by Domenichino. In the third chapel is St. Jerome, by Domenichino; the Deposition, by Caravaggio. In the fourth is a mosaic, by Pietro Subleyras, of exquisite workmanship. The fifth contains the Erasmus of Pousso. The sixth the St. Petronilla of Guercino. The seventh is St. Peter's chair, supported by four statues, each twenty-two feet in height, in bronze, executed by Beraioni. Eighth, the picture of St. Peter curing the Lame, by Mancini. The ninth, St. Peter, by Guido; St. Francis, by Domenichino. The tenth is the Clementine Chapel. The eleventh has the beautiful picture of the Conception, by Bianchi. The twelfth has the tomb of the last of the Stuart family, by Canova; and in the thirteenth is the Baptism of St. John, by Carlo Maratti. We have enumerated a few only of the glories of each chapel; for were we to pursue the subject as far as it would admit, we should require a large catalogue of description. Besides these, we have every opportunity afforded us of forming an idea of the grand cupola, adorned with lapis lazuli, and mosaics exquisitely executed by great masters of art. The great altar, the confession, the vaults, the statue of St. Peter, all are worthy of minute inspection; and we feel a pleasure in expressing our conviction, that there does not exist a more perfect work of art than the model of the Basilica of St. Peter's, so admirably executed by Gambassini. We have little doubt that as it has been the favourite theme of admiration of Italy and of France, it will be regarded with the same feeling in England.



INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S AT ROME.